

# TAR HEEL TALK

Winter 2018  
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N.C. Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

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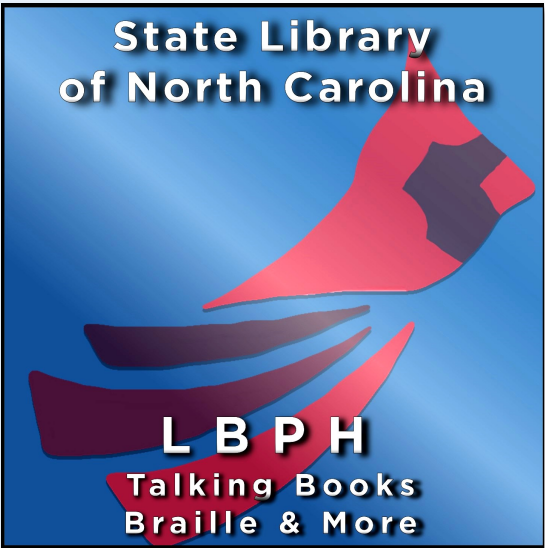
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## FEATURES

- ◇ Summer Reading Winner
- ◇ Volunteer Profile
- ◇ Tech Talk
- ◇ Spirit in Motion Interviews
- ◇ Staff Profile
- ◇ History of Valentine's Day

**Summer Reading Winner — Valari Rios**

Every Summer, our library participates in a program known across the country as Summer Reading. We hold a program for our adult and children patrons. Participants who read the most books throughout the Summer earn prizes. In total, we can have up to twelve winners. The top 3 adult readers using BARD, the top 3 adult readers who receive their books through the mail, the top 3 children using BARD, and the top 3 children who receive books in the mail. This year, we had 60 participants in the Adult Summer Reading Program and 31 participants in the Kid’s Summer Reading Program. We were able to contact the winner of the Adult Summer Reading program, Valari Rios, and asked her about her experience in this year’s program.



**Tar Heel Talk is a publication of the N.C. Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NCLBPH), State Library of North Carolina, and N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.**

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**Web Page. <http://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/lbph>**

**Internet Catalog, Ordering Site <http://webopac.klas.com/nclbph>**

- **How did you hear about our Summer Reading Program?**  
I've been a patron of the library for so long, I can't quite remember how long or how I found out about it, I think a letter in the mail came in one day and I was interested in doing it. That was, I believe, seven years ago.
- **Were you able to read all of the books that you wanted this summer?**  
I think I can read more. I love reading, so I'm pretty sure, if I really throw myself in to it, I could read a lot more.
- **Was this your first time participating in our Summer Reading Program?**  
No, I've joined before, but got to second place most of the times I have entered. But I was really determined to win this year!!!!
- **How did you make the time to read this Summer?**  
I'm pretty free most of the time, so all of my free time is devoted to books.
- **How did you learn about our library?**  
I was in middle school, I had an awesome teacher who brought me books from the library. One day she had to leave and she told me to sign up for the library so I can get books of my very own.
- **What was your favorite book you read for Summer Reading?**  
I've read a lot of classics this summer, and one book I love is Little Women by Louisa May Alcott.
- **Other than reading, how did you spend your summer?**  
My Summer was great! I went as a group leader at a program in Raleigh called the EYE retreat, also known as the Envisioning Youth Empowerment retreat. I enjoyed myself there.
- **Do you have a favorite genre? If so, what is it and why?**  
I love anything but nonfiction, unless there's an inspiring nonfiction story. I get bored easily, so fiction really gets my imaginative juices flowing.



- **How do you like your prize?**

I love my prize. I purchased something of my own with my own money and I love it.

- **Would you recommend any book you read this summer to any of the other patrons?**

I love a lot of books, so I can't really recommend books, all I got to say for all the patrons reading this, just read, read, read. It's awesome, just pick up a book, a book player or whatever it is you have with books on them and just lose yourself in the world of books.

- **Why is reading special to you?**

Reading is special to me because when you are visually impaired, you can't really see things they try to describe in movies, when you walk in to an action-packed scene, you can see the action and with every page you turn, the action unfolds right in front of your very eyes

- **Will you participate next summer?**

Yes, I hope to participate every year!!!!





## Volunteers of NCLBPH: Joy

- **Can you tell me what your role as a volunteer here is like?**

It's fun. I volunteer in the warehouse checking the books that come in on the truck. It can be demanding, but I enjoy the work.

- **How long have you been a volunteer for the NCLBPH?**

I'm currently on my 15<sup>th</sup> year of volunteering with NCLBPH. I started back in the Summer of 2003.

- **How did you become a volunteer for the Library for the Blind?**

Well, my grandson is blind and when we were driving one day I saw the sign for the library. We went in to see what kind of books the library had and we found out it wasn't a typical public library. From there, we were given a tour of the library. Since I was retired and looking for something to do with my spare time I started volunteering here.

- **What sort of things do you do outside of volunteering?**

I spend time with my family; I have



a large family. Between my two sisters, we take turns taking care of our 91-year-old mother. I also have a wonderful and supportive husband.

- **What keeps you coming back to volunteer at NCLBPH?**

The people. I love the people that work here. There has been some turn over during my years volunteering here, but I enjoy everyone I interact with.

- **Do you have a favorite moment you can think of while volunteering here?**

It's hard to choose a favorite moment; the attitude here is so pleasant.

- **Do you have a message you want patrons to hear?**

It's great receiving all of the thank you notes from patrons when they send the books back. It's not required on their part, but each note we receive from a patron solidifies the importance of the service this library provides.

## Friends Corner

Friends of the North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (FNCLBPH) is a non-profit organization consisting of citizens, volunteers, and patrons all interested in financially supporting the library and the services it provides. In many ways, the Friends bring extra help when it's needed most. The Friends understand the importance of literacy for all blind children and adults in the state and take every possible measure to make sure anyone who wants to read can read.

You can easily donate to the Friends online, become a Friends member and contact the board president. We are happy to respond to all requests for information.

There are many ways to support the Friends besides financial contributions. We hope you will find your place among the dedicated team of volunteers we have working with the Friends organization. We will be glad to provide information to you or to a family member who needs the services of the Library. We offer numerous ways to participate, and we appreciate donations of both money and time.

Friends Web Site: <https://friendsncldbph.org/>

Donate to the Friends: <https://www.friendsncldbph.org/donate.php>

Friends Membership: <https://www.friendsncldbph.org/membership.php>



*Friends of the*  
North Carolina Library for the  
Blind and Physically Handicapped



# Tech talk – The future of getting books may be MOCA

By Craig Hayward,

Imagine a future where books don't come through the mail, but instead come directly into your home wirelessly onto a cartridge. Currently a number of patrons of the library download their own books from BARD, but there are still a large percentage of patrons who can't or don't download their own books for many reasons. In these cases, the question is, "If there wasn't a mail service how would they get their books and magazines?" This is the inspiration for a pilot project going on now by the National Library



Service (NLS) called the Mobile Cartridge Download pilot or MOCA. The MOCA device is a hand-built molded plastic device made for one simple purpose, to test out delivering books



wirelessly and directly to patrons. Similar in size to a talking book player, the device is a very simple box designed for a simple purpose, to put books and magazines onto a cartridge to be played in an NLS digital talking book player. It is narrower and a little bit taller, much like a shoe box. It has a cartridge slot in front and a speaker on top that talks to a patron to let them know the status of the MOCA device, what's on the bookshelf of the device, what book is on the cartridge and other things related to adding and removing books from the cartridge. A control knob on top, near the cartridge slot, controls volume when rotated and makes the MOCA device talk to the patron when pushed.

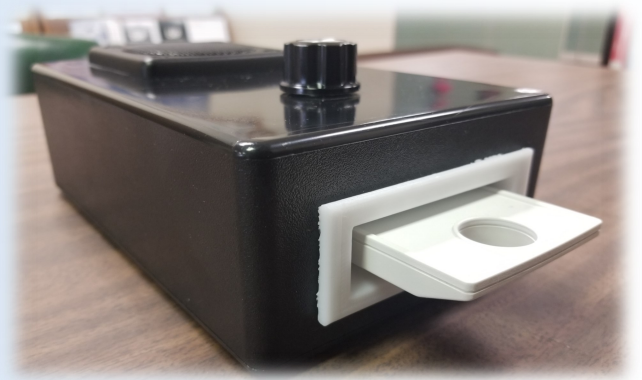
Because it's hand-built only a very small number of these devices have

been made and therefore the pilot group is small. The intent of this project is to see if patrons that don't use BARD or download anything at all could benefit from this type of service. A very small number of patrons that have digital talking book players and have never used BARD were chosen from NLS Libraries across the country, including five in North Carolina.

The way it works is Patrons or Library staff selects books. They are added by staff to an automated MOCA pilot list tool that pushes these books out to the patron's individual MOCA device. The MOCA device synchronizes with this pilot list tool and keeps items stored inside on its bookshelf. To get a new book, a patron inserts an NLS supplied writable cartridge into the MOCA device and it is copied onto the cartridge. Once finished with the book, the patron inserts the cartridge into MOCA and the old book is removed and a new book is put onto the cartridge. Overall, it is intended to make the process of getting a book by downloading a much simpler task for those who are less tech savvy.



You put a rewriteable cartridge in the MOCA, and you have your requested books sent to you instantly!





## Spirit in Motion: Q & A with Renee

By Clint Exum,

Renee Chou is the morning anchor for WRAL-TV in Raleigh, North Carolina. Before she came to North Carolina, she worked for KCRG-TV in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and before that KOMU-TV in Columbia, Missouri. When the North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped had its Spirit in Motion event at Governor Morehead School for the Blind, she was one of the featured speakers. She shared her twenty-five-day experience of providing coverage for the 2016 Rio Brazil Olympics to the audience members. She talked about how she was conflicted being away from her two-year-old daughter for the lengthy assignment, yet she could not turn down the amazing opportunity of providing coverage for a global event that happens once only four years. She also discussed how the crew went through troublesome mishaps traveling to Rio, how it was seeing the competition in person and what the process was like interviewing the athletes competing as well as the peo-



ple who traveled to Rio to go to the Olympics games in person. At the end of her portion, she was able to take some of the audiences' questions, but a few days before the event I was able to ask her a few questions of my own about being in the news industry. There is a lot more to being an anchor and journalist than what some people would believe.

## Renee Chou Q&A

- **What made you want to become a journalist?**

I like meeting people and telling their stories. I also like having a front seat to history.

- **What's a day like for you in the newsroom?**

I start my day early! I get into the newsroom about 3:30 in the morning. I talk with the producers to get a sense of what we're covering and focusing on this morning. I go through scripts, making sure they're conversational, accurate and compelling. Then I do my own hair and makeup, and sit in the anchor chair

from 4:30 – 7 a.m. on WRAL and 8 a.m.-9 a.m. on Fox 50. From 7 -8 a.m. I do a segment called “What's Trending” and am responsible for finding those elements and presenting that on air. Then we have staff meetings to plan for the next day's coverage. I have about an hour and a half where I'm answering e-mails, responding to social media, and reading up on the rest of the day's news. Sometimes I might be working on a story and using that time to go shoot an interview. Then it's helping to write scripts for the noon broadcast, and anchoring from noon to 1 p.m. on WRAL.

- **What is your favorite aspect about reporting?**





Getting out into our communities and meeting some fascinating people. In a lot of ways, reporting is like being a student and a teacher. I'm always learning something new as I'm gathering information, and like a teacher, I have the privilege of sharing that information with our viewers.

- **How have you seen the news industry change since you've been in it?**

The technology to bring you live TV has changed considerably. It used to require a microwave signal or satellite truck with lots of cables. Now, all you need is a backpack, camera, and a Wi-Fi signal and you can pretty much go live anywhere. Also, the presence of social media. It has become a primary newsgathering tool. It's also used as a way to promote our coverage, build our brands and connect with viewers in an unprecedented way. There is no more appointment television anymore, and people can get news immediately and on their phones. As a TV station, we continue to find ways to stay relevant and give people a reason to watch the local news.

- **What are some misconceptions about the news industry you've come across and would like to clear?**

The biggest is that we have "an agenda." Speaking of myself and colleagues at WRAL, we value being members of our community and we are proud to cover it. We're not afraid of shining a light on problems and issues that need to be addressed. People like to accuse the media of bias. We strive to be fair, to be accurate, and to seek all sides of a story.



- **During your career, I'm sure you've come across some news stories that upset you and your colleagues. What is your process of maintaining your professional composure, and is it a skill you use often?**

The goal is of course to maintain professionalism at all times – however, we are not robots. We are also human. And some stories truly resonate or affect us the way they might

affect you. I think there is more latitude now to “be human” on the air – sometimes it’s choking up with emotion or tearing up after a particularly tragic story, or even an inspiring one. The reaction has to be genuine, sincere and in the moment. Every once in a while, I think viewers appreciate the real emotions and seeing the real you. That said, we do cover a lot of tragedies, and maintaining composure and calmness is always paramount.



- **How was it determined that you would be one of the WRAL-TV crew members to go to Rio, Brazil?**

You’ll have to ask my news director about that—but I was honored to be selected to go! I know the station wanted coverage in all day parts (our morning and evening newscasts) so having a morning anchor go as part of the team made sense.

- **Was this your first time going to the Olympics? What were some of the highlights being there and providing coverage?**

It was my first time covering the Olympics. I enjoyed talking with athletes with North Carolina ties going for the gold. Through our connection with NBC, we also had access to many of the medalists and had the chance to interview them. I loved interviewing swimmer Katie Ledecky, shot putter Michelle Carter, and gymnast Laurie Hernandez. Plus, the Olympic venues looked amazing! What a feeling to be at Olympic Park, where you’re hearing a multitude of languages from people all around you. It truly feels like the United Nations where everyone is on the same team of cheering on the athletes and having a great time.

- **Would you like to go to the Olympics again either on assignment or just as a family trip?**

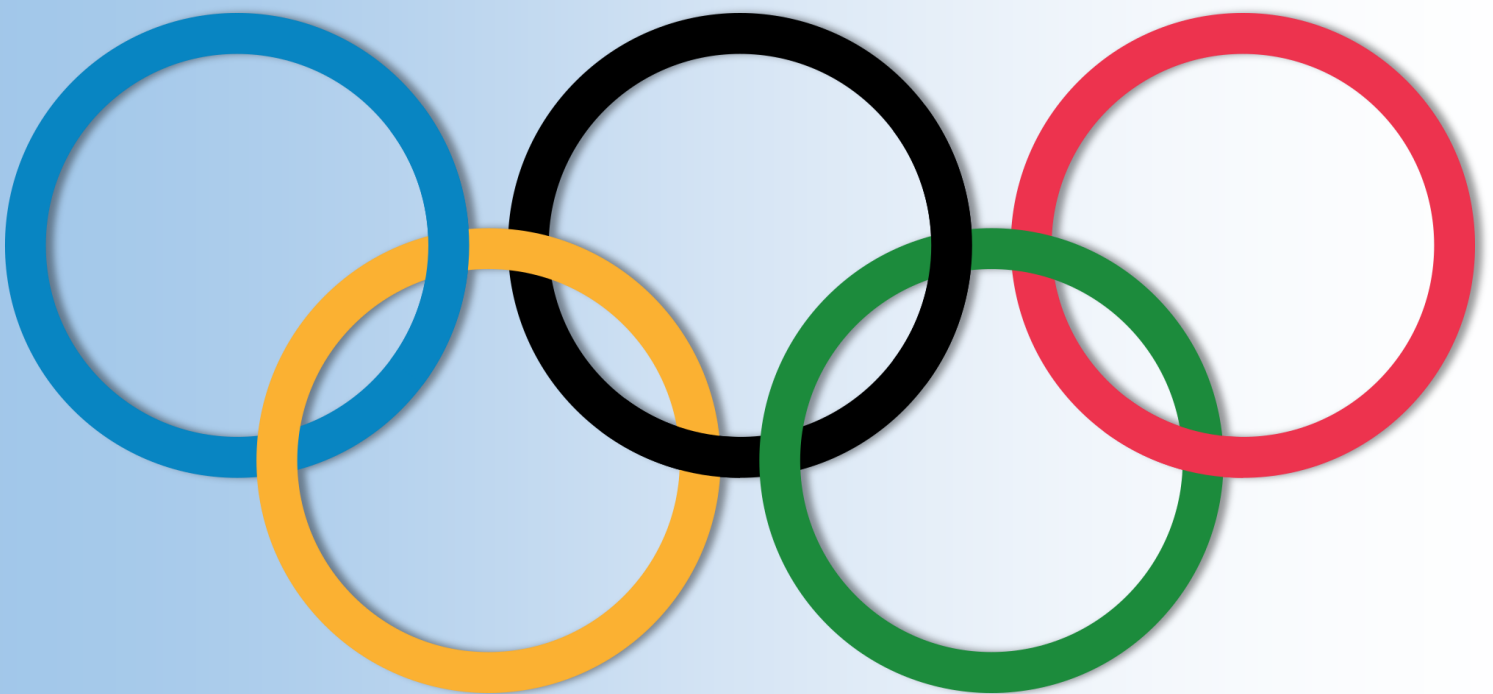
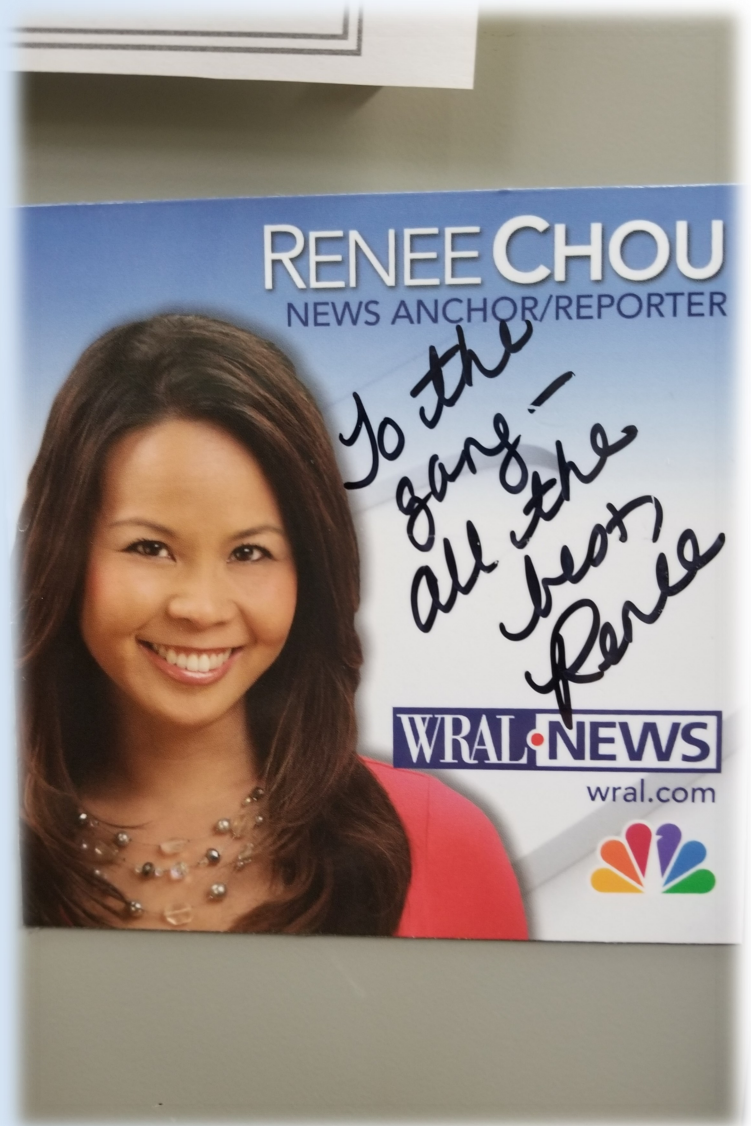
Can I choose both? On assignment requires a lot of work, but the access to athletes was nice. As a family trip, you’d be able to choose the events you want to see with no deadlines to worry about. And yes, it does feel different to be in the are-



na and experience it in person than it does to see it on TV.

- **What advice would you give to someone who wants a career in the news industry?**

Be curious. Ask questions. Don't be afraid of rejection. You'll get that a lot. You'll also hear the word "no" a lot. Find a way around it. Be willing to work long hours, crazy hours, on weekends and holidays. It's a crazy job but everyone once in a while a major assignment (like covering the Olympics) will come around that makes it all worth it.



## Spirit in Motion: Lex Gillette

By Clint Exum,

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped held its Spirit in Motion event at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind. Elexis “Lex” Gillette, was one of the featured speakers who spoke about his experience competing in the 2016 Rio Olympics. Lex is a Raleigh native, a track and field athlete, a United States Paralympic Medalist, a musician, and a motivational speaker. Also, as many of you may already know, Lex is blind. During the library’s event, Lex shared his experiences going through life losing his sight then transitioning to the athlete and champion he is today.

Until Lex was eight-years-old, he could see. Then, his sight began to suffer from retina detachments. After multiple surgeries, doctors were unable to do anything else to save Lex’s sight, and he eventually became blind. Little by little, as the days went on, Lex’s sight diminished. The transitioning period was a challenging time for him; he was no longer able to see his



family or friends, or do other activities he was used to which required having eyesight. Growing up with his sight taken away from him proved to have more than its fair share of challenges. For Lex, socializing with others was a source of difficulties. For the people in his life, socializing constructed a barrier by not making it clear to people about what kind of help he would or would not need. Lex found being more transparent about his limitations allowed the people around him to assist him, and over time, he developed an



amazing support team to help him with his transition.

Lex is a motivator. He has motivated his audiences, his teammates and others who aspire to do all they can. We all need motivation; even Lex. Lex's motivation comes from his support team who have been helping him reach his potential. Lex's motivation starts from home. His mother, Verdina Gillette-Simms, wanted him to be the best he could be so he could work to find success. She drove him to do his best in whatever he was doing whether it was doing his chores, learning to read braille, learning to use a cane, excelling in his performance in school, or becoming comfortable being able to get out and about. By learning how to get around and using public transportation, he was able to have more experiences and build more confidence.

Lex applied that same drive and confidence to his athletic endeavors. He performed exceptionally well during a series of tests in his physical education class at Athens Drive High School.

One test in particular he performed the best in, among his peers, was the standing long jump. His teacher/coach

took notice of this and encouraged Lex to do the running long jump. Since Lex was unaware of his surroundings, it made him nervous to run as fast as he could and jump as far as he could into the unknown, but his coach kept encouraging him. Eventually Lex joined



the Track and Field team and by the time he was a senior in high school, he was the best long jumper on his team. Lex has participated in a handful of other school athletic teams including Beep Baseball, Goal Ball, and Wrestling. The year after he graduated from high school, he competed in his first Paralympic games during the summer of 2004 in Athens, Greece and brought home a silver medal. In 2003, he was recruited to play Beep Baseball for the

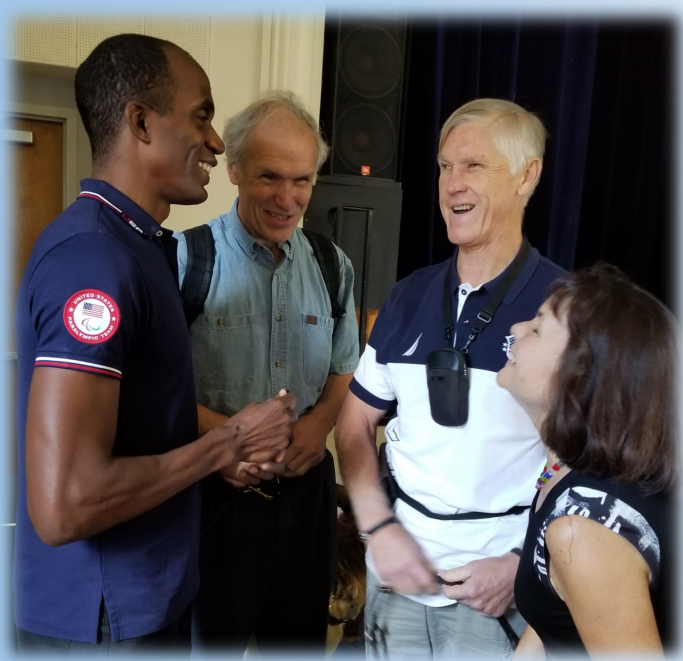


West Coast Dawgs of the National Beep Baseball Association and from 2008 to 2011 his team won consecutive world series titles. He has picked up certain skills from every sport he has competed in and has incorporated them to his track and field efforts as well as his personal life. Through his travels and competition, Lex has come across other athletes who are aiming to be the best; however, when Lex competes, he aims to outdo his previous competition performances.

Lex's message is, "There's no need for sight when you have a vision." This was prompted when he came back from the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing, China. He had graduated the year before from East Carolina University and

was trying to figure out what direction his life would take. He knew sight was not going to be a determining factor in whether or not he would be successful; instead, he began endlessly pursuing a vision. He wanted to keep winning and competing at the highest level. This would mean winning gold medals and titles, as well as breaking world records. To Lex, pursuit of a vision applies to more than athletics, "In whatever field a person operates in, from a blind and sight impaired position, I feel like we all have that power to go out there and reach deep down inside, pull it out and see that vision turn into reality". Lex has won silver medals in the 2012 and 2016 Paralympics, and he has won bronze, silver and gold medals in many world athletic championships.

Life is a constant source of stress for everyone, including Lex, and he has a few ways of dealing with it as problems arise. Physical training is a great constructive way to rid his frustrations through his body. It gives him a chance to really work on his craft while taking his mind off of those outside difficulties. Also, being a top-



level athlete comes with its perks; having access to a sports psychologist is one of them. With a sports psychologist to talk with, Lex can vent about any issues he may be going through on or off the track such as family and relationship matters. He truly appreciates having a professional



sports psychologist to open up to and work out some of his troubles. Another way Lex cools off is by listening, playing, singing and writing music. He has two piano keyboards in his room.

Though he never formally studied music, Lex is a musician. As a child, he was really good at drawing pictures of cartoon characters, video game scenes and super heroes. However, when he lost his sight writing and playing music became his way to illustrate and create those pictures again. A lot of what he has learned came from learning from friends, the occasional lessons here and there, self-teaching, and studying by ear. Lex's musical inspiration comes from the mental images he

takes from his life and his perspective of the world; he is then able to translate those views into musical pieces.

A major part of Lex's athletic training is being able to relax; not for the sake of getting rid of stress, but just simply for the sake of having fun. Going to the beach or enjoying a movie; those are a couple

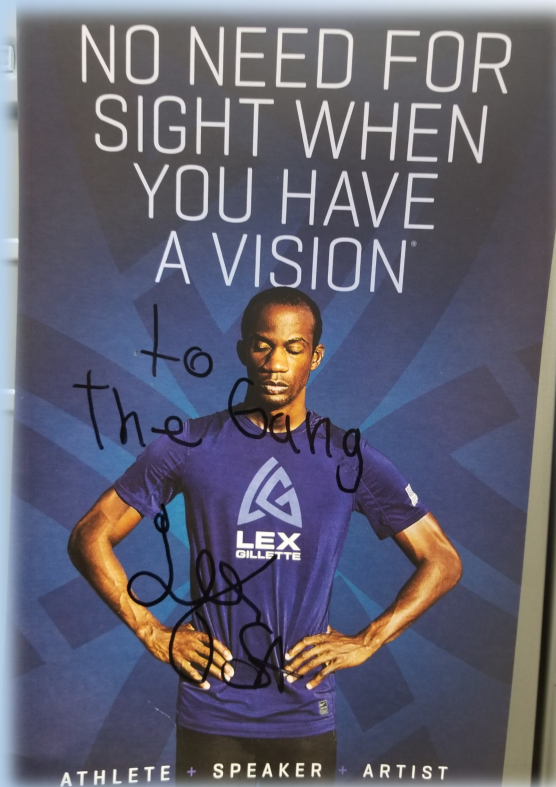
of things most people find enjoyable, including Lex. Lex spends a lot of time training in San Diego, California, so it's only reasonable for a person to visit the beach when it is so close.

He's also only a couple of hours away from Los Angeles, where he enjoys visiting some of his friends. When Lex travels to compete in different areas around the world, he doesn't fail to enjoy these places as a tourist. The area he has enjoyed most during his travels is Barcelona, Spain. When there is a combination of good food, good weather, friendly people, plenty of attractions for tourists and good competition, a great time to be had is certain. He also enjoyed going to Australia.



When he traveled there in January it was that part of Australia's Summer. It was nice because the people there spoke English as well which made communicating much easier.

Much to Lex's surprise, he has had two days named in his honor. On September 25<sup>th</sup> 2013, during an evening meet and greet with the city officials of Hagerstown, Maryland, after talking to students earlier that day about achieving their goals, Lex Gillette Day was proclaimed by former Mayor David S. Gysberts and County Board Commissioner Terry Baker; it is recognized in Hagerstown as well as its surrounding county of Washington. To Lex, it was shocking to learn that he was awarded a day named after him in an area he is not originally from. The second day Lex had proclaimed in his honor was in a city in Indiana, where he mentored students through Classroom Champions. Classroom



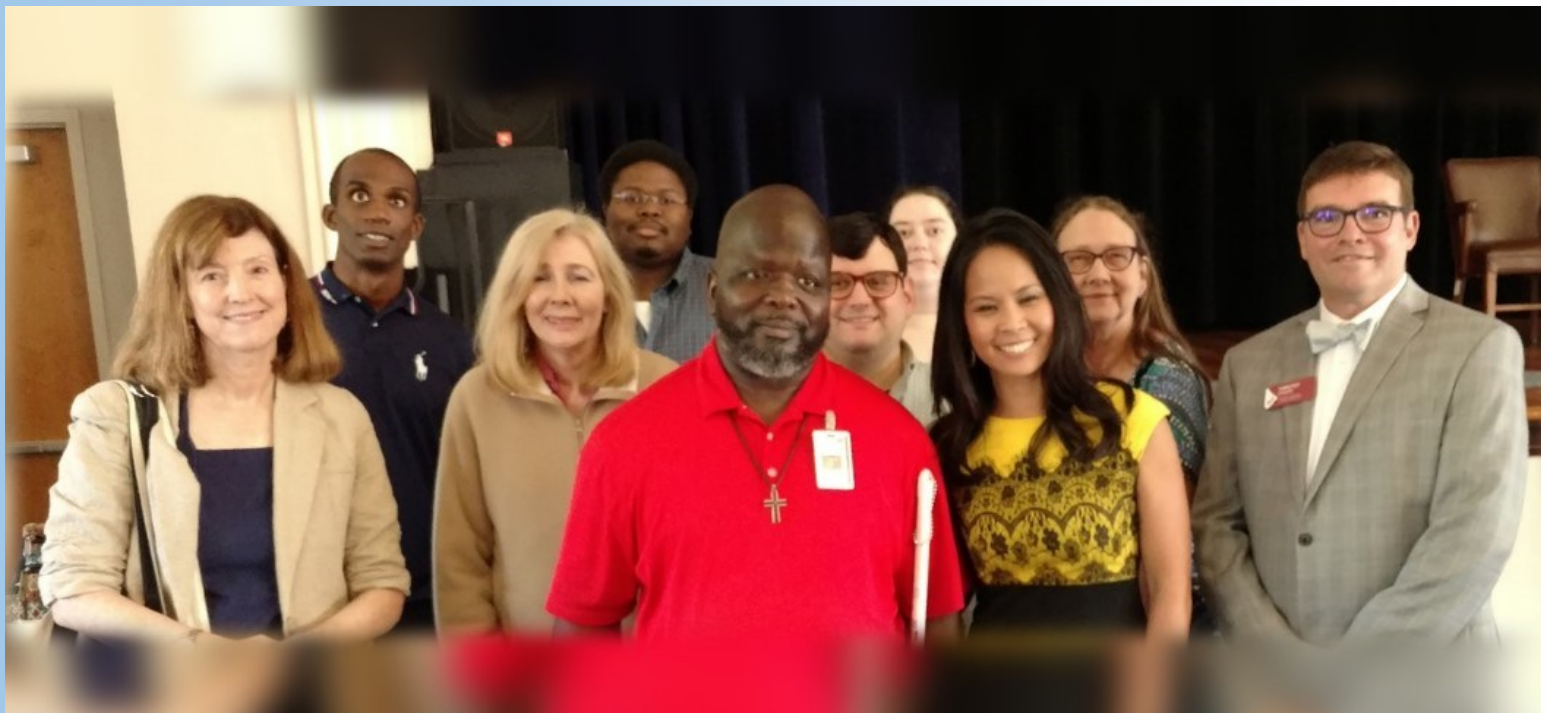
Champions is a program which pairs Olympians and Paralympians with underserved schools across the nation through the use of online video; athletes educate their mentees on the importance of life skills such as goal setting, perseverance and healthy living. Lex had been working with his class all year and the class won a contest that allowed him to visit his mentees. That morning in May of 2015, one his mentees delivered the morning announcements over the intercom; once she finished, the mayor took the microphone and an-

nounced the day would be recognized as Lex Gillette day. While this was surprising to Lex again, he knows for a community to proclaim a day for an individual meant his actions spoke to those people and resonated within them. Despite everything he has accomplished so far, he strives to continue pushing forward. He does not do it

for the recognition, but to keep living the message he shares with others which is to be the best version of himself.

As far as goals for the future go, Lex is currently spending the next few years training to return to Japan for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, and he is aiming to win the gold. He plans to continue speaking to people in order to give both inspiration and hope to his audiences. Eventually, Lex wants to become an author and write books. His advice to any aspiring athletes is to first establish a foundation. When Lex was going to school, students were not allowed to compete in extracurricular activities unless they were meeting the expectations of the academic arena.

Lex has some advice for students.... A person may not wish to compete at the elite level, so it is smart to excel in academics in order to be successful in different areas. Also, if it is something worthy of pursuing have fun with it and do not stress about it too much. Lex states the journey will definitely be hard with its own ups and downs, but a successful future and achieving a dream is worth the struggles it takes to reach it.





## Staff Profile: Peter Clukey

- **What is your new position?**

My new position is a Processing Assistant III, and I am part of the Patron Processing unit at LBPH

- **How are you enjoying your new position?**

I am very much enjoying my new position. I honestly feel it's the best career move I've ever made. Enjoying what you do every day is very satisfying.

- **What was your old position?**

My old position was part of the warehouse staff here at LBPH.

- **How is the new position different from the old position?**

My new position is extremely different from my old position. It's like night and day. My old position was more labor oriented, as where now my new position is more administrative based. I work more on the computer, doing paper work and interacting with patrons.



- **How long have you been working for this library?**

This January 2018, made three years I've been here at LBPH. Two years in the warehouse and the last in Patron Processing.

- **Where were you before you started working for the library?**

Previously before coming to LBPH, I worked for Lowes Home Improvement, and also have eight years of service with the Department of Corrections.

- **What do you miss about your old job?**

My old position was more hands on organizing all of the materials.

- **What's your favorite thing about your new job?**

My favorite thing about my new job is the interaction with Patrons, and the part of feeling like I'm making a difference. Also, the environment is more laid back, but still involves an enthusiastic sense of responsibility.



North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

# TAR HEEL TALK



# The Origin of Valentine's Day

By Gina Powell,

Ever wondered how Valentine's Day became a day to celebrate romance and love with candy, flowers and cards?

For many scholars, the first recorded association of Valentine's Day with romantic love is in *Parlement of Foules* written in 1382 by Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer wrote:

*For this was on seynt Volantynys day  
Whan euery bryd comyth there to chese his make.*

Translated into Modern English, the verses say: "For this was on St. Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate."

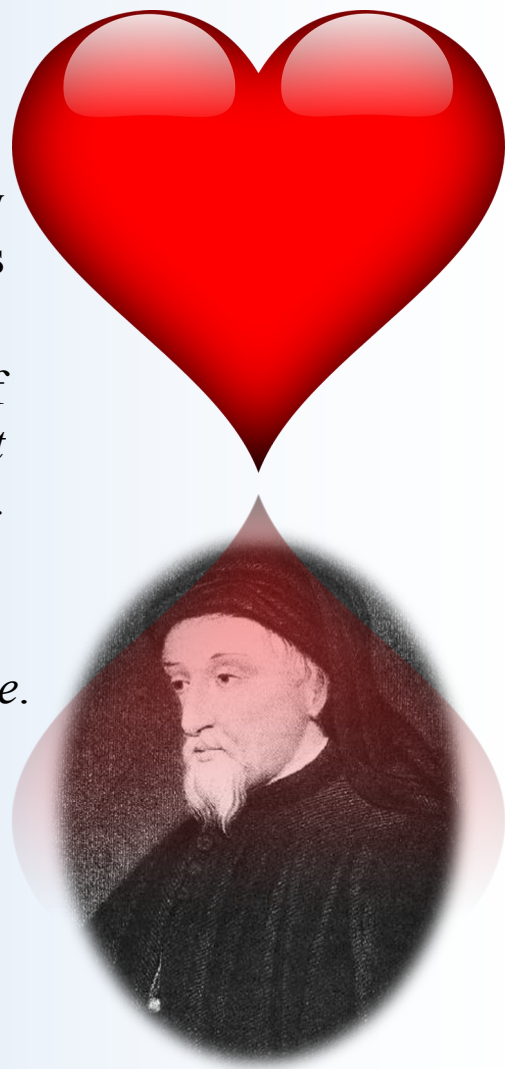
This poem was written to honor the first anniversary of the engagement of King Richard II of England to Anne of Bohemia.

Over 200 years later, William Shakespeare further romanticized Valentine's day in his play "Hamlet" (1600-1601). Ophelia, the sister of Hamlet, says the relevant lines:

*To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,  
All in the morning betime,  
And I a maid at your window,  
To be your Valentine.  
Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,  
And dupp'd the chamber-door;  
Let in the maid, that out a maid  
Never departed more.*

— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene 5

As time passed, the holiday began to gain popularity throughout Europe. During the Middle Ages, handmade paper cards were exchanged freely on Valentine's Day. Eventually, this tradition made its way to North America. In the



19<sup>th</sup> century, the industrial revolution brought forth factory-made cards. In 1913, Hallmark Cards began mass producing valentines.

In 1868, the British chocolate company Cadbury created Fancy Boxes — a decorated box of chocolates in the shape of a heart. Boxes of chocolates quickly became associated with Valentine’s Day. In the second half of the 20th century, the practice of exchanging cards was extended to all manner of gifts, such as giving jewelry.

The popularity of the Internet is creating new Valentine traditions. Many people now send e cards or use printable cards.

Valentine’s Day is now big business. The U.S. Greeting Card Association estimates that over 190 million valentines are sent each year.

About half of those valentines are given to spouses or romantic partners, with the other half given to other family members, mostly children. When valentines ex-

changed in schools are included, the number of valentines exchanged goes up to 1 billion. Teachers are the people who receive the most valentines. The average Valentine’s Day expenditure goes up each year – from \$108 per person in 2010 to \$131 in 2013.

And so, the celebration of Valentine’s Day goes on. What started as a love poem has blossomed into a full-blown romantic holiday, complete with cards, jewelry, flowers and candy. Valentine’s Day is now our sweetest holiday.





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